

North Carolina School Health Program Manual

Section B Students at Risk

Chapter 1 Child Abuse and Neglect

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse of children includes consistently blaming, belittling or rejecting a child; consistently singling out one child for negative treatment; and persistently creating public humiliation of the child. Emotional abuse is rarely manifested through physical indicators. More often it is observed through behavioral indicators, which show that the child is not functioning at his/her usual intellectual or behavioral level. Emotional abuse is the most difficult to substantiate. It must be shown that serious emotional damage was caused by the parent and that the parent refuses to permit, provide for, or participate in treatment.

Physical Indicators

- Speech disorders
- Failure to thrive

Behavioral Indicators

- Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.)
- Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive, etc.)
- Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)
- Psychoneurotic reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria)
- Behavior extremes:
 - compliant, passive
 - aggressive, demanding
 - inappropriately adult (parenting other children)
 - inappropriately infantile (head banging, rocking, thumb-sucking)
 - developmental lags (physical, emotional, intellectual)
 - attempted suicide

References:

Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina www.preventchildabusenc.org

North Carolina Department of Health & Human Resources, Division of Social Services
www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/